

energy security, and optimism. This is the story of America's natural gas revolution.

THE RYAN BUDGET AND MEDICARE

(Ms. DUCKWORTH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. Speaker, the Ryan budget once again places the burden of deficit reduction on working Americans while failing to stop the frivolous spending of subsidies for oil and gas companies that cost the American people billions of dollars every year.

I'm especially concerned that the Ryan budget will end the guarantee of Medicare for hardworking Americans who have paid into it. Medicare was created precisely because the private market failed to provide seniors with affordable and quality health care.

Even if senior citizens are able to find decent health insurance, they would still have to pay \$1,000 more a year for prescription drugs after the Ryan budget reopens the doughnut hole. Overall, their budget will force seniors to pay \$59,500 more in health care costs during their retirement. My neighbors, who work so hard to pay their mortgages and send their children to college, can't afford to spend another \$59,500.

Rather than ramming through a partisan budget that will never become law, I encourage Congress to work together on a budget that can preserve Medicare, reduce the deficit, and grow our economy.

MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from California (Mr. BERA) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. BERA of California. Mr. Speaker, over the past several weeks, I've been talking to my constituents and I've been talking to former patients about the importance of Medicare and how Medicare has impacted their lives, how they've relied on it.

As a doctor, I've taken care of thousands of patients, patients who have worked their whole life paying into a system so that they could rest easy at a time when they needed their health care. They wouldn't have to worry about it.

This is a value and a program that has served millions of Americans for decades. They've come to rely on Medicare. It is a program that works. It is a program that we've come to rely on as doctors.

Let me make it even a little more personal than that. Let me tell you the story about my parents, who came here as immigrants over 50 years ago.

My mom was a public school teacher and my dad was an engineer and a

small business owner. They got up every day. They went to work. They paid into a system over a lifetime so that when they needed their health care, they could rest easy. They knew they had a Medicare system.

Let me even make it more personal. Over these past few years, my dad is in his late seventies and he has needed knee replacements. He was able to get them. His doctor was able to order the care that was necessary to take care of him.

A few months ago, my mom suffered a mild stroke. My dad didn't have to hesitate about whether she could get health care or not. My dad could pick up the phone, call 911 and get her to the hospital. She was able to get the care that was necessary that millions of Americans count on. Her doctor was able to come and see her. Her doctor was able to order the postoperative care that was necessary.

□ 1730

That is why millions of Americans rely on Medicare—so they can rest easy at a time when they need that security of health care. It is a system that works. It is a system that working men and women in America pay into over their lifetimes so that, when they're at their most vulnerable, they're able to get the care that they need. I've seen it time and time again as a doctor. Let me share a story with you.

As a young intern in my training as a doctor in internal medicine, one of my first patients was a Roman Catholic priest, Father Mike. It was my first month working in a hospital and doing my rounds in the intensive care unit. Now, Father Mike was afflicted with ALS, more commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease. Father Mike would be in and out of the hospital, and would be devastatingly sick. For those of you who know about Lou Gehrig's disease, it is a progressive illness that slowly deteriorates and eats away at your body. It takes away your muscles and your ability to breathe. So, over the course of 2 years, I would see Father Mike repeatedly going in and out of the intensive care unit. He needed that care to keep him alive. Without Medicare, he wouldn't have been able to afford the care.

Now, let's ask ourselves as Americans: What are our values?

Our values are that we take care of our seniors, that we take care of our parents and grandparents, and we want to honor them after a lifetime of work. That is who we are. Those are our morals as Americans, and that is why I'm on the floor of the House of Representatives today to talk about how important Medicare is, not only for my parents but for parents throughout this country, for grandparents throughout this country, and also for that next generation that is currently paying into the system. I'm not alone. My fellow colleagues in medicine care about this deeply.

With that, I would like to recognize my colleague, a fellow physician from California, Dr. RAUL RUIZ.

Mr. RUIZ. Thank you, Dr. BERA.

This Congress has a responsibility and an opportunity to work together to grow our economy and to set this Nation on a fiscally responsible path. However, the Ryan budget is irresponsible, and it places the burden of the deficit on hardworking American families and seniors. This plan ends the guarantee of Medicare. As an ER doctor, I know that many of my senior patients are struggling financially and rely on Medicare in the moments of their lives when they need it the most.

Our priority should be reducing health care costs in order to make Medicare stronger and more sustainable, but this budget transforms Medicare into a voucher program, shifting the costs of health care onto the shoulders of our seniors. We must, once again, work together to protect and preserve Medicare, reduce our deficit and decrease health care costs. I urge my colleagues to come together across party lines and put American families and our seniors first.

Mr. BERA of California. Thank you, Dr. RUIZ.

I urge Americans to share their stories. I urge them to share the importance of Medicare and how they rely on it. Share the stories about your parents and grandparents. I urge the Members of this body to share their stories. We all have parents and grandparents. We all care about this program, and we all have stories to tell.

Just today, in my office, I had a colorectal cancer survivor come to visit. She talked about how her cancer was diagnosed early because she was able to go get a colonoscopy—because she was able to get the preventive care services that were necessary. She would not have been able to do that had she not had access to Medicare, had she not had access to basic cancer prevention.

That is what's at stake here—making sure that our seniors, that our parents and grandparents, have access to that care when they need it the most. That's why I'm on the floor here today, because we have to protect Medicare—a program that has worked for decades. It is a program that we rely on, so I want to hear your stories about how we protect Medicare and make sure it's there for generations. This is a program that has worked time and time again. Let me even share another story of patients that I've taken care of.

I've taken care of hundreds of men and women who do physical labor—construction workers, folks who get up every morning and go to work. They don't make a lot of money, but they pay into a system. I'd encourage every American to pull out their paychecks and take a look at them, and you'll see right on there that you're paying into the Medicare system. Even those who are 25 or 30 years old are paying into the system.

Why do we do that?

We pay into the system so that, when we need our health care, we're able to